

Encourages Eligible Louisiana Veterans to Pick Up Benefits This Friday
September 30, 2009

WASHINGTON - Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) announced today that eligible student veterans can request emergency checks to cover educational expenses while they wait to receive their college benefits provided under the new G.I. bill. Thousands of veterans who applied for educational benefits under the new G.I. bill program have not yet received their payments due to delayed processing and bureaucracy. These emergency checks will help these veterans make payments towards books and housing this fall. *Encourages Eligible Louisiana Veterans to Pick Up Benefits This Friday*
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"Veterans who have proudly served our country should not have to further postpone their education or dip into their savings because of bureaucratic delays and red tape," said Rep. Melancon. "These emergency checks will bridge the gap and ensure that our veterans have the resources they need to take full advantage of the new G.I. Bill college benefits they were promised. I encourage veterans in south Louisiana - especially those who returning from Iraq and Afghanistan - to take full advantage of this opportunity."

The checks for up to \$3,000 will be distributed to eligible students at [VA regional offices](#) across the country starting this Friday, October 2. Students can go to one of the 57 regional benefit offices with a photo ID, a course schedule and a certificate of eligibility to request payment of their housing and book allowance. This money will be deducted from future payments, which are expected to arrive on the normal schedule - the beginning of the month following the period for which they are being reimbursed.

Last year, Rep. Melancon voted in support of the new G.I. Bill to restore the promise of a full, four-year college education for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. Qualified veterans were able to apply for the new college benefits beginning in May of this year, and started receiving tuition benefits in August, along with housing and book stipends which are paid retroactively. Almost 300,000 claims have been submitted for the program. More about the new G.I. bill can be found [here](#) .

"The new G.I. bill offers well-deserved educational opportunities to our brave veterans and their families," said Rep. Melancon. "I will continue working in Congress to ensure that the men and women who sacrificed so much for our country get the very best care and the benefits they've earned in a timely manner."

A list of regional VA offices is available at: www.vba.va.gov/VBA/benefits/offices.asp . The VA

is also working with Veteran Services Organizations to send representatives to campuses with large veteran student bodies and to help students access the regional offices.

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